

Sneed Family Papers, 1854-1908



Williamson County Archives

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Collection Overview

Title: Sneed Family Papers

Date Range: 1854-1903, bulk 1854-1880

Creator: Sneed Family

Extent: 2 document boxes

Abstract: The Sneed Family Papers collection contains correspondence and personal papers relating to the Sneed and Williams families of Middle Tennessee.

Language: English

Repository: Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN

Collection Number: WCA 0013

Scope and Content

This collection contains personal papers, mainly correspondence, from members of the Sneed family. Mary Sneed (later Williams then Owen) is the recipient for the majority of the correspondence. Additional items include receipts, deeds, poetry, property surveys, essays, and other materials relating to family members and friends of Mary Sneed.

Arrangement

The folders are arranged alphabetically by title. Correspondence is divided by recipient and date, if known. If the materials are undated, it is noted.

Historical Notes

The main recipient of the correspondence in this collection is Mary Sneed, who often went by Mollie. Mary and her family historically are from the Brentwood area of Williamson County, TN. Mary was the daughter of Constantine Perkins Sneed and Susannah Perkins Hardeman Sneed. Her father does appear in the collection, sometimes writing as C. P. Sneed. Also, Mary had several siblings, including Sarah Marr Sneed Williams (also called Sallie), James Hardeman Sneed, Bethenia Hardin Sneed Edmondson, Agatha Ann Sneed Bush, Robert Scales Sneed (in collection writes often as R. S. Sneed), Cornelia Matilda Sneed (possibly also called Neat, Nete,

or Netie), Susannah Perkins Sneed Bush, Constantine Perkins Sneed, Jr., William Lent H. Sneed, Elizabeth Owen Sneed (also called Bettie), and Thomas Nicholas Sneed. Many of these siblings appear in Mary's letters. Mary does go through name changes, which are reflected in her correspondence. Mary Sneed married George Williams in 1867, changing her name to Mary Williams. Marriage record in our archives index lists a George W. Williams married a Mollie M. Sneed on September 19, 1867. George died in July of 1870. His death notice is digitized in our collection under book 18, page 178. They did have one child, James Turner Williams. Turner's death notice from 1895 is in book 18 on page 178 above his father's notice. He does appear in this collection, often going by Turner or J. T.

Mary later married Littleberry Robertson Owen in 1881, and changed her name to Mary Owen. Mary gained two stepchildren, Mary Lou Owen and William N. Owen. Mary and Littleberry had at least three children together named Constant, Sue, and Frank. None of them seem to appear in the collection. Littleberry often went by L. R. Owen. Littleberry was a Justice of the Peace in Williamson County. Littleberry's commission record from 1888 is in the Justice of the Peace collection here at the archives.

Windy Hill, the home built by Mary's father Constantine Sneed, is believed to have been built in the 1820s. One feature of its craftsmanship is the laying of its bricks in a Flemish pattern. The home was recently sold to the City of Brentwood. Plans for the 52-acre area are to develop a park with several features, including historical education signage. Construction started on the property as of late 2024. Additional information on the home's history and the park can be found in the vertical files in the Archives Reading Room.

Mary Owen attended Columbia Conference College, a Methodist school in Columbia, TN. It was previously called Columbia Female Seminary, and underwent a name change under the leadership of Rev. J. O. Church (who you will find mention of in the collection as well as his daughter Fannie). Some sources also called it Tennessee Conference Female College. As many as 80 young women attended the school at one time. Many of Mary's letters from the 1850s either mention the school or were written by her schoolmates. Reference to the school is made in Jill K. Garrett's *'Hither and Yon' II: More of the Writings of Jill K. Garrett*, which can be found in the Reading Room at Williamson County Archives. Census records show Church and his family in Maury County in 1850 and 1860. The 1850 census shows him, his wife, and at least 18 other individuals (probably students). The 1860 census shows Church, his wife, children, and over 40 other people. A few of the individuals listed in the 1860 census with Church are teachers that are referenced in the correspondence Mary received.

POW camps and military references are found in this collection as well. There are letters from prisoners at two military prisons during the American Civil War. The main one is Johnson's Island in Ohio. Another was Camp Douglas in Chicago. Johnson's Island was a Civil War prison on Lake Erie, which was known as an officer's prison. The multiple Johnson's Island letters are from two men, Captain William H. Hardman and 3rd Lt. Wallace R. C. Russell, both listed as being part of the 55th Georgia Infantry, Company. Hardman addressed Mary as Cousin. Johnson's Island has an additional tie to Williamson County. Zebulon Montgomery Pike Maury, Abram Maury's (considered the founder of Franklin and Williamson County) son, died in the military in 1862. A good resource if you are interested is The Friends and Descendants of

Johnson's Island Civil War Prison, which is the nonprofit responsible for preserving and maintaining the site (now a National Historic Landmark).

References to enslavement: There are multiple references and discussions of enslaved people in the correspondence of this collection. These first-hand accounts can give us insight into the treatment and perception of the enslaved. One example would be a letter written by R. S. Sneed to Mary Sneed in 1858 about a runaway enslaved man.

Burials: Many members of the Sneed family are buried at the Sneed Cemetery (on the property of Windy Hill), including Mary, her second husband, her stepchildren, her parents, as well as many siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins. George Williams and his son, Turner, are both in the Williams Cemetery in Brentwood, TN. Mary and Littleberry's children are buried at the Spring Hill Cemetery in Nashville, TN. One family burial that seems to be unknown is that of Constantine Perkins Sneed, Jr., Mary's younger brother. He supposedly was killed at the Battle of Chickamauga during the Civil War. I did not find Constantine Jr. in many records, but in the 1860 census, he was living with his father and other family members.

Other items of note:

Cholera is mentioned in multiple letters. One was from 1873, which is one of multiple cholera epidemics in Tennessee during the 19th century. Other outbreaks were in 1834, 1849, and 1892. James K. Polk contracted cholera and passed away during the 1849 outbreak.

The steamship Galveston is mentioned in one letter from 1857. This ship hit another steamship called Opelousas in November of 1857. If you are interested in learning more about this, the Galveston & Texas History Center might be a valuable resource.

The Tennessee State Library and Archives also has a collection titled the Sneed Family Papers. Many of those individuals mentioned in that collection are related to the individuals within this collection. That collection is available on microfilm at TSLA.

Note about spelling: The phrase 'I before e except after c' did not appear in grammar books until the 1860s in James Stuart Laurie's "Manual of English Spelling." Some of these letters reflect the grammar change over the years.

Access and Use

Access to the Collection: This collection is open to the public for research during normal business hours.

Use of Materials: Unrestricted

Preferred Citation: Sneed Family Papers, Williamson County Archives, Franklin, TN.

Contact Information: Williamson County Archives
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Administrative Information

About the collection

Acquisition: Sneed Family donation

About the finding aid

Author: Kelsey Horn

Date: November 2024

Descriptive rules: Finding aid based on *Describing Archives: a Content Standard* (DACS)

Search Terms

Names:

Bush, William
Carpenter, Julia W.
Church, Fannie
Church, J. O.
Clark, Mollie
Edmondson, John
Gardner, Emily
Hanna, Mollie
Hardman, William H.
Hardeman, Alice
Hardeman, Almira
Hardeman, Laura F.
Hardeman, Lent
Hardeman, Mary
Hardeman, Sarah
Hardeman, William
Hubby, Anna

Hughes, Anna R. E.
Hughes, Sallie
Hynds, B. D.
Hynds, Constant
Hynds, George W. L.
Hynds, Lent
Hynds, Sarah E.
January, Will
Ledbetter, Fannie
Ledbetter, John
Mayfield, George
Mayfield, Sallie
Moore, Mary T.
Owen, Mary
Owen, L. R.
Perkins, James
Primm, Newel
Pyron, Melissa
Pyron, Nannie
Ratcliffe, Fannie
Russell, Wallace R. C.
Scales, Fannie
Scales, Mary
Scales, Sallie
Scales, William
Sneed, Alexander E.
Sneed, Agatha
Sneed, Betheria Hardin
Sneed, Bettie
Sneed, Constantine Perkins
Sneed, Constantine Perkins Jr.
Sneed, Cornelia Matilda
Sneed, Daniel P.
Sneed, Malinda Kerr
Sneed, Mary Moore
Sneed, Robert Scales
Sneed, Selina
Sneed, Susan
Sneed, Thomas N.
Sneed, James
Sneed, William S.
Wilson, Sarah Ann Brooks
Williams, Ann C.
Williams, Fannie
Williams, George
Williams, Mary

Williams, James Turner
Williams, John C.
Williams, Sarah
Williams, Susan

Types of Materials:

Correspondence
Chancery Court Record
Poetry
Songs
Essays
Deeds
Property Surveys
Receipts (including dry goods and tax)
Title abstract
Will

Container List

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Advertisement - 1873
1	2	Chancery Court Record - 1908
1	3	Correspondence - 1896
1	4	Correspondence to George Williams - 1861
1	5	Correspondence to Mary Owen - 1881-1892
1	6	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1854
1	7	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1855
1	8	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1856
1	9	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1857
1	10	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1857
1	11	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1857
1	12	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1858
1	13	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1858
1	14	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1859
1	15	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1859
1	16	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1860
1	17	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1861
1	18	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1862
1	19	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1863
1	20	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1864
1	21	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1865

1	22	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1866
1	23	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - 1867
1	24	Correspondence to Mary Sneed - Undated
2	25	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1867
2	26	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1868
2	27	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1870
2	28	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1871
2	29	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1872
2	30	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1873
2	31	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1874
2	32	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1875
2	33	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1876
2	34	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1877
2	35	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1878
2	36	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1879
2	37	Correspondence to Mary Williams - 1880
2	38	Correspondence to Mary Williams - Undated
2	39	Correspondence to Sarah Ann Brooks Wilson - 1895
2	40	Correspondence to Turner Williams - 1885
2	41	Deeds – 1857, 1872, 1884
2	42	Envelopes - 1858 - 1888
2	43	Envelopes - Undated
2	44	Envelopes - Undated
2	45	Essays - 1861
2	46	Family Genealogy - Undated
2	47	Literary Society - 1888
2	48	Poetry - Undated
2	49	Property Surveys - 1854, 1871
2	50	Receipts - 1869 -1879, Undated
2	51	Songs - 1865, Undated
2	52	Tax Receipts - 1865- 1881
2	53	Title Abstract - 1888
2	54	Title Agreement & Notes - Undated
2	55	Will - 1870